

Item #: \_\_\_\_\_

Prepared by: Commissioner Carpenter

Approved by: Christy Kinard  
Assistant County Attorney

**Resolution urging Governor Phil Bredesen and the Tennessee General Assembly to improve the Basic Education Program Funding Formula (BEP) to address the inadequacies that exist and provide for sufficient and equitable funding for Memphis and Shelby County Schools. Sponsored by Commissioner Mike Carpenter.**

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**WHEREAS**, the Basic Education Program (BEP) formula strives to provide the level of financial support necessary for all of Tennessee's schools to succeed; and

**WHEREAS**, the BEP formula is based on Average Daily Membership, but also considers a county's fiscal capacity in determining the level of state funding that county will receive; and

**WHEREAS**, the City of Memphis has one of the highest rates of poverty in the nation, but Shelby County as a whole is deemed to have a greater "ability to pay" than many other Tennessee counties and is therefore disadvantaged by the BEP formula; and

**WHEREAS**, under the BEP formula a county's fiscal capacity has a greater impact on the amount of state funds received than factors such as number of at-risk students, number of students who are English Language Learners (ELL) and number of students with special needs; and

**WHEREAS**, Memphis City and Shelby County Schools combined far surpass other school districts in the number of children qualifying for free and reduced lunch, the number of students who must learn English as a second language and the number of students who are gifted or have physical disabilities or learning disorders; and

**WHEREAS**, the BEP formula fails to recognize the inherently higher costs of educating children in an urban setting and the unique challenges faced by teachers and administrators in an urban environment; and

**WHEREAS**, Shelby County government contributes 236% above the BEP required local match to Memphis City Schools and 183% above the required local match to Shelby County Schools; and

**WHEREAS**, state government was unable to fully fund BEP 2.0 for fiscal year 2008-2009 preventing Memphis and Shelby County Schools from receiving a combined \$39 million in critical funding; and

**WHEREAS**, recent research has shown that Memphis and Shelby County Schools received \$200 per student less than the state average for fiscal years 2005 and 2006 resulting in a difference of more than \$30 million per year.

**NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF SHELBY COUNTY, TENNESSEE**, that we hereby urge Governor Phil Bredesen and the Tennessee General Assembly to improve the Basic Education Program funding formula to address the inadequacies that exist and provide for sufficient and equitable funding of Memphis and Shelby County Schools.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that County Lobbyists and staff charged with government relations responsibilities are directed to collaborate with their counterparts in Memphis City Government, Memphis City Schools and Shelby County Schools to draft legislation addressing these inadequacies to present to the Governor and the General Assembly for consideration.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that passage of legislation correcting the inadequacies of the BEP formula for Memphis and Shelby County Schools shall be deemed urgent and the top legislative priority for Shelby County government and their advocates.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that this resolution shall take effect from and after the date it shall have been enacted according to due process of law, the public welfare requiring it.

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A C Wharton, Jr., County  
Mayor

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

ATTEST:

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Clerk of County  
Commission

ADOPTED: \_\_\_\_\_